THE SURFACE CASE SYSTEM IN SINHALA

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Abstract:

The aim of this paper is to investigate the surface case system in Sinhala. At the beginning a general discussion has been made about the traditonal view on the case system.

Then the case system of colloquial Sinhala has been examined and concluded that it operates with a five - term system. Secondly, it has been stated that the necessity of distinguishing an Objective case in looking into the written Sinhala. Therefore, the written Sinhala operates within a six- term case system. The names of the cases have been divorced from their semantic implications and they have only a symbolic value.

Sinhala is the Language spoken by majority of Sri Lankans, that is nearly 70% of the population in Sri Lanka.

From historical point of view, Sinhala is a Modern Indo-Aryan Language which is related to Vedic Language or Old Sanskrit in India. The Chronicles of the island, Dipavamsa and Mahavamsa, say that the first Aryan colonization in the island happened in 500 B. C. Since then, the language which was spoken by them gradually and systematically changed. The phonology, morphology and syntax of the Modern Sinhala hold a great difference from that of old Indo-Aryan.

Modern Sinhala has an elaborate surface case system which has been described in detail by traditonal Sinhala grammarians.[1] They have been influenced mainly by South Indian grammatical tradition.[2]

1. The present study is made on the surface case system of Moderm Sinhala from the structural point of view. So that the case is determined solely by the form of a nominal. At the last section of this paper an attempt is made to study the case system of written Sinhala in relation to spoken Sinhala.

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1. The foremost traditional Sinhala Grammar in which the case system has been explained is *Sidat -Sanngrawa* of 13 th century. After that period a number of grammars appeared on the lines of *Sidat-Sangarawa*.

2. See *Siddhanta Pariksanaya* Intrtoduction by W. F. Goonawardhane, 1959 edition, Associated News Papers Co. Ltd. Colombo.